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APRIL 20, 1956

RECORD OF THE EIGHTH ROYAL RIFLES,

BY CAPT. F. C. WURTELE, RETIRED LIST.

Reprinted from the CANADIAN MILITIA GAZETTE of the 3rd and 10th March, '86.

"Volens et Valens."

AS the 28th February, 1887, will be the 25th anniversary of the formation of the Eighth Royal Rifles, a short record of the regiment may be interesting to the past as well as present members of the old corps and also to their many friends scattered throughout the Dominion. In consequence of the many events to be chronicled, and the limited space to which a cruel editor restricts me, it will be necessary to make this record somewhat concise, not to say abrupt.

The war declared by England against Russia, in 1854, no doubt awakened the Canadian Government to the fact that complications might possibly arise on this side of the Atlantic, and because the militia was very "sedentary" both in name and nature, a more active force was needed, therefore, on 16th August, 1855, general orders called for the formation of volunteer corps of all arms. Quebec responded with alacrity, for the following corps were gazetted on 31st August:—Quebec field battery, Capt. Gamache, one company garrison artillery, Capt. John Boomer, and one volunteer rifle company, Capt. Charles Corneil. Several other rifle companies, both English and French, were subsequently raised, but from some reason, probably from insufficient encouragement or the great expense they were put to for uniforms, the Government in those days only furnishing arms and accoutrements, there was a gradual disorganization, and on 8th August, 1861, the most of them were disbanded.

As the rebellion was now raging in the United States, this state of things did not last long, for a number of young gentlemen met together and organized the "Victoria Rifles," electing William H. Kerr, Esq., their captain, under whose command the company was, on 30th August, 1861, gazetted as the No. 2 Company Volunteer Militia Rifles of Quebec. The stoppage on the high seas of the British steamer "Trent" by an American man-of-war, and forcibly making prisoners of two of her passengers, Messrs. Mason and Shdell, nearly caused a war between the two countries. This gave an impetus to volunteering all over Canada, and in Quebec the following rifle companies were raised and gazetted, 10th January, 1862:—The Diamond Harbor Rifles, Capt. John Burstall, the "Wellingtons," Capt. James Gillespie, the Ballytrammons, Capt. L. B. Dumlin, and another company by Capt. Thomas Burns. On the 22nd of that month another was added to the list by Capt. Thomas J. Murphy.

These six companies were formed into a battalion and gazetted on 28th February, 1862, as the 8th Battalion Volunteer Militia Rifles of Quebec, with Captain Thomas J. Reeve, late Capt. H. M. 79th Highlanders, as Lieut.-Colonel in command.

The companies were numbered as follows:—

No. 1—"Victorias," Captain Archibald Campbell.

No. 2—Diamond Harbor, Capt. John Burstall.

No. 3—Capt. Thomas Burns.

No. 4—Wellingtons, Capt. James Gillespie, Brevet Lieut.-Col.

No. 5—Ballytrammons, Capt. L. B. Dumlin.

No. 6—Capt. Thos. J. Murphy.

By general orders of 28th March of that year the battalion was designated the 8th Batt. or "Stadacona" Rifles. Drill and rifle practice were carried on most energetically, and on 28th April, 1864, No. 4 Co., Capt. Gibsone's, was awarded the first prize of \$100 given by Government to the 7th military district for drill and general efficiency. By the same gazette No. 3 Co., Capt. Burns, and No. 6 Co., Capt. Murphy, having failed to pass the inspection, were removed from the list of the volunteer militia. On 23rd December, 1864, two companies were called out for active service, and on the 26th the Victorias, under Capt. Allevn, Lieut. Fraser and Ens. Pendergast, left for the frontier, along with the Diamond Harbor boys, under Lieut. A. H. Jackson, Lieut. Froste Wood Gray and Ens. H. S. Lemesurier. The former company proceeded to join the 1st Administrative Batt. at Windsor, and the latter went to Laprairie to the headquarters of the 3rd Ad. Batt. These companies returned at the end of April, 1865, and the Ballytrammons, under Capt. Dumlin, Lieut. Cochrane and Ens. J. Louis, left for Windsor on the 26th April to be under Lieut.-Col. Reeve, who had been appointed to the command of the 1st Ad. Batt. This company, which was No. 1 of that battalion, returned home on 6th July. The next call out was for the Wellingtons, Capt. Gibsone, to proceed on the night of 30th December of that year to Chateau Richer in aid of the civil power. This civil power service, I may here remark, is one which is never glorious, and is uniformly disagreeable as well as dangerous work, and the number of times that the battalion has successfully performed such service in between pleasanter duties is an eloquent testimony to their discipline and utility.

As a precautionary measure against the threatened invasion, from the United States, of the Fenians in 1866, the Government called nearly the whole active force of the country to arms, and on midnight of 8th March the Eighth were called out and subsequently billeted in Montcalm Ward, near the drill shed, along with the rest of the Quebec city brigade and kept there, under arms, till the 29th, when they were dismissed with orders to drill regularly twice a week. Regular garrison duty was performed, and besides drilling every day for two hours both morning, afternoon and evening, a nightly picket of two companies alternately patrolled silently around outside the city walls, through the suburbs, St. Rochs, and lower town to the Queen's wharf and returned to the drill shed. This tramp of two hours at a time, because of the "dead march" pace, was very monotonous and tiresome. The regulars shut the city gates at midnight and kept the city surrounded by a cordon of sentries, posted on the ramparts, whose cry of "all's well" sounded clear and weird through the still night. The promised raid took place on the morning of 1st June, when the Fenians crossed over at Fort Erie, fought at Ridgeway and got back to Uncle Sam's territory as soon as possible. The regiment was called out and drilled part of every day till the 18th June, when it was dismissed. A citizens' relief committee had been formed, and subscriptions taken up to assist the families of the volunteers called out on these occasions, but the "Victorias" generously declined to accept any of this fund, and at the inspection held on the evening of 9th January, '67, Mr. H. S. Scott, on behalf of the committee, as a token of esteem for this generous action, presented the company with a solid silver bugle, which is still in possession of No. 1 company.

The 9th Batt. had two English companies on its strength, No. 5, known as the Highland Rifles, Capt. Herald Douglass, Lieut. Horace R. Sewell and Ensign Ed. F. H. T. Patterson, and No. 6 company, Capt. James Black Stevenson and Ensign Alfred H. White. These companies

were on February 8th, 1867, transferred to the 8th Batt. as No. 5 and 6 companies respectively. This year the Enfield rifles were exchanged for Sniders and the price of ammunition was 25 cents a package of ten rounds.

On 1st July, No. 1 company, 55 strong, paraded at Montreal to take part in the review held there on Dominion Day, and marched past at the head of the 3rd Batt., or Victoria Rifles. In December, 1868, Quarter-Master Morgan and Mr. F. C. Wurtele, lately a member of the Victorias, raised a company which was enrolled as No. 2, replacing the "Diamond Harbors," then disorganized. By the new law the whole force had to re-enroll within three months of this act coming into force; the companies of the 8th which complied with this order were Nos. 1, 2, 5 and 6 (vide G. O. of 6th February and 5th March, 1869.) Capt. Morgan and Lieut. F. C. Wurtele were gazetted on 19th March, 1869, vice Capt. A. F. A. Knight and Lieut. J. Reynar, resigned.

In the spring of 1870 there were more rumours of Fenian raids, and the regiment was called out on 13th April and drilled three hours daily till the 22nd, when drill ceased. The threatened raid took place on the 24th May, when the "Pirates" crossed the borders at two points in the Eastern Townships and were quickly driven back with loss of several killed and wounded. The whole of the regulars in Quebec left for the frontier and the volunteer brigade did garrison duty during their absence, the 8th being quartered in the Jesuit barracks till the 20th of that month. That same spring Louis Riel started his first insurrection in the North-west and two regiments of volunteers, one each from the provinces of Quebec and Ontario, were formed and ordered to accompany the expedition under Col. Wolsey to suppress the rising, and were gazetted on 12th May. Several men of the 8th joined and Capt. Barrett of No. 1 company and Capt. Patterson of No. 5 were gazetted as Lieutenants, and Ensign W. Ross to the 2nd or Quebec battalion. Ens. Charles Douglass subsequently joined the depot company at Kingston.

By general orders of 14th October, 1870, the different companies of the 8th were renumbered, Nos. 5 and 6 to be respectively Nos. 3 and 4. A fife and drum band was organized on 3rd January, 1871, and subsequently changed into a brass band.

The regiment was called out to aid the civil power on 3rd and 4th March, 1873, at the Quebec East elections, and was quartered each day in the Jacques Cartier market hall. Captain and Bt.-Major Charles A. Pentland, of the 55th Megantic infantry, raised a company, which was on 12th September of that year gazetted as No. 5 company.

Again it was necessary to give aid to the civil power on nomination day, 22nd January, 1874, when Nos. 1 and 5 companies were placed on the Citadel for that day. The elections took place on the 29th, and as trouble was expected at Levis, Nos. 1, 4 and 5 companies were sent over there and Nos. 2 and 3 were placed on the Citadel.

On the evening of 29th January, 1875, while drill was in progress, the Mayor arrived and requested assistance at the Beauport lunatic asylum, then in flames; arms were piled, belts taken off, and the battalion got to the fire with celerity and worked hard till one o'clock next morning.

Lieut.-Col. Reeve retired from the service and Major and Brevet Lieut.-Col. R. Alleyn took command on the 6th April, 1877, and the same G. O. contained the change of the designation of the regiment from "Stadacona" to 8th "Royal" Rifles. Lieut.-Col. Alleyn served in the Victorias as private in 1861, and 8th Nov. of that year was commissioned

as supernumerary ensign in the company, ensign 18th Dec., lieutenant 21st March, 1862, captain 21st August of the same year, brevet major 20th Sept., 1867, major 3rd Jan., 1868, brevet lieutenant-colonel 20th Sept., 1872, and lieutenant-colonel commanding as above. The regiment now possessed a very fine brass band, which was increased to a full military band of 30 men with a bugle and drum band of 16 more.

An 15th March, 1878, one of the former companies of the battalion was reorganized as No. 4 company by Capt. Charles B. Charlewood, late lieutenant H. M. 30th Regiment. The existing No. 4 was made No. 5 and No. 5 gazetted as No. 6.

On 23rd May the regiment, 245 strong, proceeded to Montreal along with 100 men of the garrison division and two guns of B battery to take part in the grand review before Lord Dufferin, held at Fletcher's Field on the Queen's Birthday. The 8th held their own in drill with the crack corps of Ontario and Montreal, although the Glengarry caps they wore detracted somewhat from their appearance alongside of busbies and bearskins, nevertheless it was remarked on all sides that the "boys in Scotch caps" were second to none in drill and smart soldierly appearance. The other troops present, besides the whole Montreal brigade, were the Queen's Own of Toronto, Ottawa Field Battery, the Governor-General's Foot Guards, and a smart American company from St. Alban's called the Barlow Greys.

The next service the regiment was called on to perform was of a serious nature; the labor troubles on the work at the new parliament buildings had spread, and culminated on the afternoon of 12th June, by the mob sacking Renaud's flour store and getting fired on by B battery. The 8th were then called out, and in an hour mustered strong at the armory. As the Parliament then in session had been threatened, they were quartered in the Parliament buildings for the night, and next morning the garrison, hitherto composed of the 8th, B battery and Canadian Hussars, was, by the request of the Lieut. Governor, reinforced by three of the Montreal brigade, 5th Royals, 1st Prince of Wales and 3rd Victorias, under command of Lieut.-Colonel Fletcher, D.A.G., and Lieut.-Colonel Bacon, Brigade Major. The Quebec garrison and part of the Montreal force were quartered on the Citadel, and the remainder in the skating rink. The arrest of a number of rioters and this timely display of force put an end to the disturbances. On the afternoon of Saturday the 15th there was a review on the esplanade of the whole brigade, except two companies of the 8th on duty at the Parliament house, when the Mayor and corporation presented an address to the Montreal troops, after which column of route was formed, and all marched to the Richelieu wharf, when the Montrealers embarked for home. The 8th remained on duty on the Citadel till the 19th, when they were inspected on the esplanade by Lord Dufferin and Lieut.-Gov. Letellier. This was the first appearance of the regiment in public wearing the new helmet. On returning to the Citadel, before being dismissed from duty, Colonel Strange addressed the regiment, complimenting it on its high state of discipline and efficiency.

In the spring of 1879 the pioneer corps was formed and its equipment furnished by some of the officers.

As No. 4 company had become disorganised and Capt. Charlewood had resigned, Capt. H. J. Miller, of the 55th Megantic infantry, raised a company to replace it, and was gazetted to the 8th on the 28th of March 1879.

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strength, band and pioneers, to take part in the grand review held there before the Governor-General, Lord Lorne, and H.R.H. Princess Louise. Besides the Montreal brigade, there were also present an American regiment of the New York National Guard, the 13th Brooklyn, 520 strong, Queen's Own of Toronto, Governor-General's Foot Guards, Ottawa field battery, Princess Louise Dragoon Guards, Shefford field battery, B battery, 100 men and two guns, 8th Royals, Quebec garrison artillery, Royal Military College cadets, and Royal Naval reserve from the Allan steamers.

Again Quebec was disturbed by riots: this time the ship laborers gave trouble, and the 8th were called out on the 15th August, 1879, and quartered in the skating rink. Late in the night of Sunday 17th, the regiment marched down to the Queen's stores in Champlain street, and remained there till the 22nd, when it marched to the Citadel and was dismissed. On the evening of the 21st H.R.H. Princess Louise arrived via H.M.S. *Bellerophon*, from a visit to the maritime provinces, landed at the Queen's wharf, where she was received by a guard of honor of 100 men and band of the 8th, under Capt. Ray, Lieuts. Norris and Webster, the remainder of the regiment lined Champlain street.

Again the ship laborers gave trouble, and to aid the civil power the 8th were called out on the 12th May, 1880, and placed on the Citadel till 7 p.m. of the 14th, when they were relieved, except one service company under Capt. LeSueur, together with a company of the 9th battalion, which remained there till the 17th, when they were dismissed.

This year the Queen's birthday review and sham battle took place on the plains of Abraham, before the Governor-General (Lord Lorne), their Royal Highnesses Princess Louise and Prince Leopold. Besides the Quebec brigade, the following regiments were present: 62nd infantry, of St. John, N.B.; 5th Royal Scots, 6th Fusiliers, 1st Prince of Wales, 3rd Victorias and 65th Rifles, and a company of high school cadets from Montreal.

On the 30th April, 1881, Lieut.-Col. Alleyn resigned his commission on being appointed judge, and Major Andrew C. Stuart was promoted to the command. Lieut.-Col. Stuart joined the regiment as ensign in No. 6 Co., 1st May, 1868; lieutenant, 8th October, 1869; captain, 28th January, 1870; brevet-major, 28th January, 1875; major, 18th April, 1878.

On the 11th March, 1883, the regiment met with a sad loss in the death of Lieut. Col. Stuart, who had been seriously ill for some time. His funeral took place on the 13th, and was attended by the whole regiment. The firing party of 150 men was under command of Major Scott, and the gun sleigh was furnished by A battery in charge of Capt. Peters.

General orders of 22nd May contained Major Scott's promotion to the command of the regiment. Lieut.-Col. E. G. Scott joined the Victorias in 1862, and passed through all the grades to color-sergeant, and was appointed ensign in the company on 1st May, 1868; lieutenant, 5th March, 1869; captain, 9th February, 1872; brevet-major, 9th February, 1877; major, 30th April, 1881, and lieutenant-colonel, 22nd May, 1883, but antedated to 27th April.

This year, 1883, Capt. W. E. Russell raised a signal corps of 13 men and fitted them out with all the necessary apparatus of flags, lamps, telescopes and heliographs; the next year they were mounted and went through a riding course on the Citadel, subsequently they rode out to the plains, and were inspected by the D.A.G. and specially mentioned in his report. They became very proficient at long distance signalling,

and on the expected arrival of H.M.S. *Canada*, with H.R.H. Prince George of Wales, a party proceeded to Cape Tourmente, 30 miles below Quebec, and signalled to the Citadel with their heliograph her approach.

The new pattern breastplate, with the old regimental motto, *volens et valens*, was gazetted in general orders of 12th October.

H.R.H. Princess Louise and Lord Lorne left Canada permanently by the S.S. *Sardinian* on 27th October, on which occasion the regiment furnished a guard of honor on Allan's wharf, of 100 men and band under Capt. Ahern, Lieuts. Stuart and Miller.

In March, 1885, the North-west rebellion broke out, and the regiment, which was at the time performing annual drill, held itself in readiness, hourly expecting marching orders for the front, and two companies under Major LeSueur did garrison duty on the Citadel for one month, owing to the absence of A battery on service. Capt. Prower, chancing to be at that time attached to B battery, proceeded with them to the war, and was present at the action of Cut Knife, and went through the campaign with the battery. Lieut. Roche got attached to the Montreal garrison artillery, and served in the North-west with them.

On the 6th March, 1886, Lieut.-Col. Scott retired from the 8th, and Capt. H. J. Miller, as senior officer, took command and was gazetted lieutenant-colonel on 31st March. Lieut.-Col. Miller served in the ranks of the Highland company of the 9th Battalion, and subsequently in the Victorias till 10th February, 1871, when he was gazetted lieutenant in the 55th Megantic infantry; captain, 12th September, 1873; rejoined the 8th as captain of No. 4 company, 28th March, 1879, and promoted lieutenant-colonel as above.

Hitherto, company promotion prevailed in the 8th, but on 30th July general orders changed this to seniority or regimental promotion.

The annual inspection took place this year on the 24th May on the plains of Abraham, before the Governor-General and Lady Lansdowne, when Private D. Smith, of No. 6 company, was presented by her ladyship with the North-west medal, he having served through the campaign with the Royal Grenadiers.

Three of the officers of the regiment were called by government to serve on the commissions to investigate the manufacture of snider ammunition at the government factory, Lieut.-Col. Scott and Capt. Balfour serving on that of 1883, and Capt. F. C. Würtele on that of 1885.

This sketch would not be complete without the "shooting record," which has been almost continuous since the formation of the regiment, and it may be well said, difficult to excel. Efficiency in the use of the rifle had always been the desire of the officers from the first, and from this cause the battalion began to make a good name on the rifle ranges, as far back as 1865, when the Victorias, or No. 1 Co., tried their skill against the non-coms. of H.M.'s 17th Regiment, and got beaten, but were successful in the return match. In 1868 they were victorious in two matches with H. M. 30th Regiment, one with the 60th Rifles, and one with the Royal Engineers. These matches were all 10 men a side of all ranks, and the team was chosen from No. 1 Co., or the Victorias. The Stadacona team took first battalion prize, \$250, at the great Dominion rifle matches held in 1868 at Laprarie, together with a number of individual prizes. They generally held their own in all the district matches at Quebec. In April, 1869, the regimental team fired a match with H.M.'s 69th Regiment, winning by 29 points. The next important victory scored was on the 16th August, 1871, at the Provincial matches held at Montreal, when the team composed of Capt. Morgan, Serpts.

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Hawkins, Baxter, Ferguson, and T. Holloway, won the Dominion cup, valued at \$800, given as a battalion prize by the P.Q.R. association. That same fall the Grand Trunk rifle brigade sent a team to Quebec and beat the 8th on Beauport Flats. However, in 1872 the return match was won by the Stadaconas at Montreal, on the day before the P.Q.R. association matches, which they had come up to attend. Again, the team composed of Capt. Scott, Lieut. Balfour, Paymaster Frew, Sergts. Hawkins and Baxter, was victorious in the battalion match, winning the Dominion cup, this being the second time in three years it became the property of the regiment.

In 1873 Capt. Morgan and Sergt. G. Baxter of No. 2 company were chosen and went to Wimbledon. In 1874, Lieut. Balfour won the Governor-General's bronze medal, and Capt. Morgan again went to England on the Wimbledon team. On the 6th March, 1879, as the battalion had not been for some years very successful at rifle matches, a meeting of the regiment was held, and the regimental rifle association was reorganized on a sound basis. The result was that in 1880 the team took second prizes, both in the battalion and association, and third prize in the skirmishing matches at the Provincial, and Corporal G. Philips won the Governor-General's silver medal and Lieut. Governor's medal, but as a team the 8th did nothing at the Dominion, although individually they did well; Capt. Balfour won the Governor-General's prize of \$250 and his place on the Wimbledon team for 1881. That year the Canadians won the Kolapore cup and Capt. Balfour was 6th score in that match. At the Provincial the team took third prize for skirmishing, and at the Dominion matches third battalion prize.

In 1882 the Royals were well to the fore in the provincial, taking 1st prize both in the battalion and skirmishing matches and 4th and 6th team prizes for volley firing, and Sergt. G. Philips won the Dolan Cup. They won at the Dominion matches 5th battalion prize and Corporal Goudie won his place on the Wimbledon team for 1883, and went to England that year. In 1883 the 8th were again successful, both at the Provincial and Dominion matches, winning at the former the 2nd Batt., 2nd Military, 4th Association and 1st prize in the 3rd series Military match. At Ottawa they took 1st Minister Militia, 5th Dominion and 3rd prizes in the Gzowski matches. Capt. Balfour won the Gov.-Genl's Medal, besides the N.R.A. Medal and Snider champion badge. Lieut. W. H. Forrest took the Grand Aggregate and first place on the Wimbledon team and went to England in 1884. This year the team again were close up at the Provincial, taking 2nd Battalion, 5th Association, 3rd Skirmishing and 3rd Volley Firing prizes. At the Dominion they won 2nd Minister of Militia and 4th Dominion Match prizes and Lieut. Forrest again won his place on the Wimbledon team. In 1885 they took only 3rd volley firing prize at the Provincial, but at the Dominion were 2nd place for the British Challenge Shield as well as 5th prize in the Gzowski competition. In 1886 they won the 4th Association, 2nd Battalion and 1st Volley Firing prizes at the Provincial; and the team composed of Sergts. Alex. Thomson, Goudie and Dewfall, Corporal Hartley and Private R. D. Norton carried off the British Challenge Shield, that much coveted prize, for skirmishing and volley firing; also the 4th Gzowski prize, and Sergt. Goudie his place on the Wimbledon team for 1887. To the regimental rifle association and the active encouragement given to rifle shooting by the officers is due the successes above recorded. The regimental matches held annually on 29th June have always been looked forward to and carried out most successfully.

Since the formation of the regiment the roster contains the names of 115 officers. The 25th anniversary was celebrated, on the evening of 21st February by a ball, given in the Academy of Music, by Lieut.-Col. Miller and officers to the non-com. officers and men of the regiment.

The present officers of the Royal Rifles are:

Lieutenant-Colonel.—H. J. Miller.

Captains.

G. E. A. Jones,
J. Elton Prower,
E. Montizambert,

J. S. Dunbar,
Charles Miller,
J. F. Burstall.

Lieutenants.

A. E. Hall,
T. I. Poston,
F. W. Ashe,

J. B. Peters,
W. C. H. Wood,
W. M. Dobell,

C. J. Dunn.

Adjutant.—Ernest F. Würtele, Capt.

Surgeon.—P. Coote.

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